

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry "documentary" (actually a long-form campaign advertisement) days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair has abused their license by adopting a partisan posture and pretending to seek responses to their pronouncements. Whenever I have attempted to reply to Mark Hyman's commentary, the avenue for response has proven to be blocked. They are engaged in pure partisan trickery. Now they are prepared to commit a flagrant violation of the public trust. They are using public property to subvert a federal election. If they go through with it, I expect the FCC to require Sinclair to sell their stations. A slap on the wrist will not be sufficient.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. When a television or radio station's license is up for renewal, the station should be required to do extensive outreach to get public input into the decision. The current corporate welfare arrangement of accountability-free giveaways cannot be allowed to stand. Thank you.